

# The Storefront for Art and Architecture

51 Prince Street, New York, N.Y. 10012

MIRROR WORKS by Howard Rosenthal, April 1-27

Twenty-four works by Howard Rosenthal are included in his current exhibition at The Storefront for Art and Architecture. Among them are four drawings and sixteen photographs of his Sky Disk, a monumental wooden bowl-like structure 47 feet in diameter and 10 feet high, which is completely lined on the inside with  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch plate glass mirror. When one enters the Sky Disk all that is visible is the sky, its reflection and oneself. The sculpture was constructed on a potato farm near Riverhead, Long Island during the summer of 1983, the drawings were executed in 1982 and 1983 during its planning, and the photographs were taken over a three month period after the sculpture was completed.

Accompanying the documentation of the Sky Disk are four smaller sculptures: The Device For Keeping One's Head In The Clouds, The Device For Looking Around, The Unnatural Device For Relieving Nature, and Sky Rocker. Like Sky Disk, these works are participatory in nature. One either puts them on one's head or sits on them to get a view of the sky or oneself through the use of angled mirrors. Sky Rocker was constructed with Eastern Spruce and  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch plate glass mirror; the other small works were executed in brushed aluminum and mirror.

All are on view Wednesday to Sunday, 12:00 to 6:00 p.m. through April 27. If you would like further information please call 431-5795.

# S T O R E F R O N T

FOR ART AND ARCHITECTURE 51 PRINCE ST. NYC. 10012. 431-5795

April 1, 1984

MIRROR WORKS:

by Howard Rosenthal

\$ 3,000

1. SKY ROCKER \$ 3,000  
70.5"x103"x31.5" Wood and Plate Glass  
Mirror. 1984
2. UNNATURAL DEVICE FOR RELIEVING NATURE \$ 3,000  
37.5"x37."x23". Aluminum and Plate Glass  
Mirror. 1983
3. DEVICE FOR KEEPING ONE'S HEAD IN THE CLOUDS \$ 1,500  
8"x34"9". Aluminum and Steel, Mirror  
Plexiglass. 1982-83
4. DEVICE FOR LOOKING AROUND \$ 1,500  
11"x19.5"x19.5" Aluminum, and Mirror  
Plexiglass. 1982-83
5. PROPOSAL FOR SKY MOUND \$ \$ 600  
31.5"x27" Watercolor on Paper. 1981
6. PROPOSAL FOR SKY DISK, AERIAL VIEW \$ 700  
26.5"x30.5" Watercolor and Pastel on Paper  
1983
7. PROPOSAL FOR SKY DISK, INTERIOR VIEW \$ 600  
26.5"x31.5" Pastel on Paper. 1982
8. PROPOSED STAGE OF CONSTRUCTION OF SKY MOUND \$ 600  
31.5"x37" Pencil, Charcoal, and Ink on  
Paper. 1981
9. PHOTOGRAPHS OF SKY DISK \$ 400  
15.5"x23" Color Cibrochrome Prints.  
Photo by Howard Rosenthal. 1983

*Kyong Dong Park*  
Director

# HOWARD ROSENTHAL

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An account of my career

Any account of my career, brief or otherwise, would be best pursued in terms of the major themes with which I have worked and the circumstances in which I have been working.

After graduating from Rhode Island School of Design in 1969 I was employed by the Museum of Modern Art as a graphic and exhibition designer. The Museum was an ideal environment for working and continuing my artistic education, but soon after beginning I started to long to make my own art rather than exhibit the art of others.

In July 1972 I left the Museum to pursue my own work. When I began making sculpture in 1973 I devised a plan whereby I created a series of sculptures using devices that manipulated air, fire, water and earth. Among these works were "Earth Spray", an edition of aerosol cans that spray earth, and "Light Bulb With Candles", a one-thousand watt light bulb suspended over nine candles (the heat from the light bulb melted the candles). During this period I supported myself as a free-lance graphic and exhibition designer for museums, galleries, hospitals and foundations.

The participatory and durational aspects of some of the early sculptures as well as my experience designing exhibitions led me to create a series of installations, several of which I built as a graduate student at Pratt Institute



from 1978 to 1980. Shortly after graduating I began to develop the idea of "Sky Disk" (slides 1-4), a monumental wooden structure, built in the shape of a pie plate, forty-seven feet in diameter and ten feet high, the inside of which was lined with quarter inch plate glass mirror, so that upon entering all that was visible was the sky, its reflections, and oneself. In September 1982, after numerous unsuccessful attempts at fund-raising, I used my own savings to begin constructing "Sky Disk" as well as shooting a documentary film about it. The sculpture was completed in August 1983, shortly after which I received a grant from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting to finish the film and prepare it for nation-wide broadcast on PBS. At the same time I was invited to teach at Connecticut College. "Sky Disk" was the largest of numerous mirror sculptures, most of which were exhibited at the Storefront for Art and Architecture in 1984 and 22 Wooster Gallery in 1986. The last of this series, "One's Own Zone" (slides 5-6), was commissioned by The Public Works Inc. of Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1985.

After having concentrated on "Sky Disk" (both the sculpture and the film) for so long and having executed most of my ideas for smaller mirror pieces I felt the need to work more spontaneously. With the idea that reflection is not only a physical characteristic of certain materials, but an essential human activity, I proceeded to create numerous small scale sculptures, working within the limits of my studio. This process has

allowed me a sense of spontaneity and freedom that is precluded by monumental public works. The last two years have been extremely productive. I have executed several pieces which involve reflection, contemplation and vision. Among these are "Reflective Object" (slides 7-8), "Sand Table" (slides 9-10), and "Wait and See" (slides 15-16). Other small scale works, such as "One Box" (slides 11-12), deal with philosophical issues such as the problem of the One and the Many or they may explore the relationships between the worlds of two, three and four dimensions ("By Products", slide 13). During this time language was engaged by many of my works, both as a result of philosophical inquiries as well as having used language and type as a graphic designer. Other works were inspired by thoughts of mirroring, duplication, mass production and the paradoxical use of material. One of a series of six works executed in bees wax in 1987 and 88 was "Wax Cups" (slide 14). Many of these small works were exhibited in a one man exhibition in May 1989 at White Gallery in Tokyo.

Throughout my career drawing has been an essential part of my work, both as a means of developing ideas and as a way of proposing large scale projects. I am currently working on drawings as a proposal for a sculpture that is being commissioned by the Toledo Botanical Garden in Toledo, Ohio.

During the last two years I have developed many ideas for monumental sculptural installations, the themes of which are closely related to some of the smaller sculptures executed

during the same period. Because the enormous expense involved in executing these works may preclude their realization, the drawings have been brought to a high degree of resolution as the ultimate manifestations of the ideas they represent. An example of this is "Sense or Something Else" (slide 17). As a consequence of these drawings, illusionistic representation has suggested new possibilities, and for the first time in my career I am planning to use representation as an end unto itself. I have included a slide of three views of a model of "Tight Rope Walker" (slide 18), a large project on which I am currently working. It will be comprised of a panel with a painted representation of sky and sea, approximately five feet high and ten feet long mounted on a false wall three feet in front of an actual wall, which in turn will be covered with black velvet. The velvet covered lamp in the center of the panel reinforces the illusion that the circle on the right is flush with the surface of the painted panel. In fact, as can be seen in the slide, the circle is a hole cut out of the painted panel. On the left side of the panel, behind the window shade, is a photograph of a female sex organ, and near the bottom, suspended out from the panel by two brackets, is a rope. I intend to use both objects and representations as a sheath between the tangible world and an intimation of the void, and as a way of exploring themes of vision, eros death and the infinite. More will be said of this in my plans for the period for which the Fellowship is requested.